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# The Black Cat

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**September 1904**

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Harold Kinsabby.

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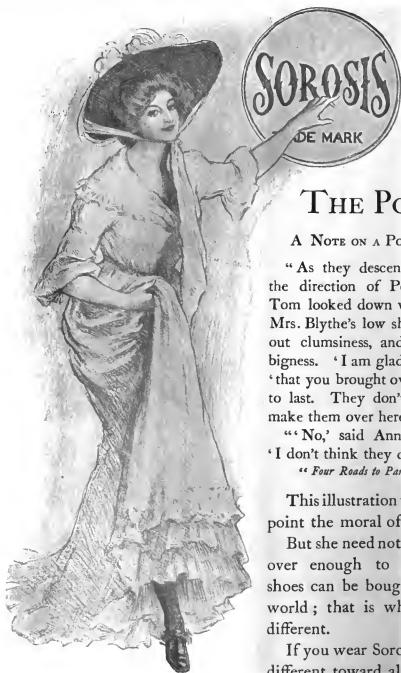
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*"Four Roads to Paradise." Page 178.*

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# The Black Cat

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## The Real Thing.\*

BY HAROLD KINSABBY.



JUST before midnight on the ninth day of December in the year 1881, Malcolm Joyce, of New Haven, made the acquaintance of the real thing. Prior to that time he had been a sceptic. At the time of his startling experience, he was in San Francisco, visiting friends whose home was charmingly situated near the summit of Nob Hill, that conspicuous eminence on California Street, once the scene of "sand-lot" riots, and famous for its palaces of millionaires.

Joyce, having spent the evening with his host at a theatre party and an hour at whist, had glanced over a packet of London papers, smoked a cigar, and turned off the light preparatory to going to bed. He stepped to the large bay window of his chamber, to enjoy for a moment the impressive panorama spread below him in the sombre silence.

There before him, just across the bay, whose fantastically scattered lights of red and green serve as guiding stars to the mariner passing through the Golden Gate, lay Oakland, the beautiful city of sunny homes. To his left loomed up with awe-

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inspiring grandeur through the dim shadows the palatial residences of the immediate vicinity, each dark and silent in its solitary majesty. To the right, in the very shadow of this manifestation of Occidental millions, and but a block distant, lay acres of dismal roofs, sheltering never-ending scenes of Oriental contrast — Chinatown — with its fifty thousand souls, its underground opium joints and gambling hells, its temples of wealth and piety and dens of vice and penury.

As Joyce turned from the contemplation of the strange contrast presented by the scene, the silence of which was broken only by the ceaseless buzz of the invisible cables in the street below, he was startled by the signal gongs of two cable cars which passed each other directly in front of the house. Almost unconsciously he returned to his position at the window and paused to watch the one disappear over the summit, while the other as speedily descended the long, steep hill, so steep that its pavement, never trodden by horses' hoofs, is grass-grown in the crevices. He stood but a moment and then, realizing the lateness of the hour, turned abruptly to go to bed. As he did so, his eyes swept once more the hilltop just beyond.

Horror! Was he asleep? Did he dream? No. From the tower half-way down the hill came the first stroke of midnight, assuring him that he was awake. With an icy shudder, chained to the spot, he continued to gaze at a ghastly spectacle, clearly outlined upon the gloomy background by the light of the street lamp a block above.

He saw it moving — a human skeleton with uplifted arm and flowing shroud, all ghastly white, all too real to be mistaken, from the gleaming skull to the fluttering robe. He saw it approaching nearer and nearer — gliding swiftly and noiselessly through the air, above the middle of the street. He tried to move, but could not, — his eyes refused to leave the hideous sight. He saw it coming, closer and closer. It would pass below him, not a hundred feet away.

Determined that will and courage should conquer doubt and fear, summoning all his strength of nerve, he pressed closer to the window, so close that his face fairly touched the glass — and he saw a human skeleton soaring through the air.

Now, Malcolm Joyce was not easily frightened. No one had ever



accused him of cowardice, and they who knew him readily believed his statement that he enjoyed solitude. Yet, as he stood there in the darkness, his eyes fixed upon the vanishing figure, he felt somehow that he should welcome company, particularly the company of another not easily frightened. So strong was this impression of the occasional disadvantage of solitude that without delay he relighted the gas and stepped before the mirror. The deathly pallor and agitation that confronted him was bewildering.

As he tried to calm himself and change the current of his thoughts he recalled the "spook test" of an old hunter whom he had met in New South Wales.

This test consisted in asking oneself three questions: "Are you awake, are you sober, are you sane?" By the time these queries are propounded and answered, the ghost on trial will have proved itself an illusion.

Without hesitation Joyce answered the first two questions — he was unquestionably awake and sober. But was he in his right mind? He picked up a paper and read for a moment, but failed to grasp a single idea! He turned the page. He could read, but he could not understand! He jumped up, dazed, frightened, trembling, perspiring. Was his mind giving way under the strain it had undergone? Once more he looked at the first page of the paper before him. It was "London Punch"! He was sane!

Hardly had he satisfied himself of the success of his test, when the familiar signals of two passing cars again sounded in his ears. With the air of a man convinced that the cause of fear and suffering has been groundless, he lighted a fresh cigar, stepped briskly to the window, and, puffing slowly and regularly, calmly watched the course of the diverging cars. As the distance between them increased, he followed the one going down-hill until it had reached a point nearly two blocks distant, and then turned his attention to the summit over which the other had already disappeared.

As he sharply watched the critical spot his anxiety decreased as, after some moments, no signs of the unearthly sight appeared.

Of course, he reasoned, while the object he had beheld some ten or fifteen minutes before might never appear again, it still might have been a ghost. A sensation akin to doubt stole over him.

But, whether or not his eyes had, after all, played him a trick, he was now ready to go to bed.

He drew down the shade of the window to his left and had grasped the cord of the one directly before him, when his arm fell to his side as if paralyzed. With a loud whirr the suddenly released shade rushed upward, and there, not thirty yards in front of and below him, he beheld the shocking spectre gliding up-hill.

He stood in rigid horror, held by the grim monstrosity.

Inclining slightly forward as it soared past, with bony arm upstretched to heaven, its bleached death's head bare and shining, the snowy drapery enshrouding its skeleton form in a silent flutter, it presented to Joyce's view the most horribly revolting and yet fascinating spectacle he had ever beheld, and one that he never forgot. In the face of this further proof all his doubts vanished, and he felt absolutely certain that he had seen what is here described.

But, even before the frightful object had finally passed from his view, he experienced one of those sudden revulsions of feeling by which fear becomes courage, and anxiety is followed by mental calm, and thus reconciled to a new belief, he went to bed.

When he awoke on the following morning, he decided to say nothing to any one of his strange experience until he had taken counsel with an intimate bachelor friend, a lawyer. He felt relieved, therefore, to find the breakfast chat confined to topics entirely foreign to the spirit world. Evidently none of the family had been disturbed by ghostly visions. As he looked across the table into the eyes of a bewitching girl, he almost shuddered at the fleeting thought that the gruesome nocturnal sight he had seen might have been a warning—an omen of some dread calamity that might dash forever the hope he entertained with regard to her. It was to see her again—to be at her side and, if possible, to woo her for his own—that he was in San Francisco.

Two years previous they had first met, on the opposite coast of the continent. While ranging in the Maine woods, Joyce had climbed Mount Royce and Speckle Mountain and visited the tourmaline mines, and on one of his woodland tramps had come across a college student with one foot inextricably caught in a bear trap. Fortunately, a leggin buckle and a stout branch of undergrowth,

caught at the same time, had prevented the terrible teeth of the trap from crushing the bone, and the young fellow, a brother of Joyce's future idol, was promptly released, nearly exhausted from the shock of his adventure and the fatigue of his fruitless struggles to escape.

The gratitude of the rescued youth and his parents resulted in an invitation to Joyce to visit the family, which he accepted with much alacrity, after having seen the pretty daughter of the house.

Ten o'clock found Malcolm Joyce at the office of his friend, the lawyer. He had expected Lucien Nelson to be sceptical and full of good-natured pleasantry and was therefore prepared for the reception accorded his unusual tale. He paid no attention to his friend's intimation that he had seen the ghost while under spiritual influence, rejected a proposition for a writ of ejection to be served upon it, and finally aroused Nelson's interest and secured the promise of his co-operation in an armed attempt, to be made that night, to investigate the ghastly mystery.

Accordingly, twelve hours later, the two young men, each with a revolver, were snugly ensconced in a dark corner of the bay window of Joyce's chamber on Nob Hill. For two hours Malcolm was obliged to endure all the thinly veiled ridicule, biting sarcasm and ironical humor that a friend alone dare utter, so that when he at length turned up the light for a moment to make sure of the time, he was glad to find that a few moments more would bring the hour of midnight — the traditional time for ghostly visitations.

The sudden appearance of the cable cars that passed each other on the hill at twelve served as a signal for another outbreak of raillery on the part of Nelson, but Joyce, in no mood for further banter, kept his eyes upon the progress of the cars, searching the steep incline for the unearthly object which he hoped, yet dreaded, to behold. The downward car had not yet passed the cross-walk three blocks below, when, with a feeling of awe which he could not have described, mingled with a sort of lively satisfaction, he saw again the animated skeleton flash before his eyes. Emerging, apparently, from the very earth, in the rear and a little to the left of the departing car, it rose until its full length stood suspended in the air. Then, after a slight, wavering pause, it came gliding up the hill.

His experience of the previous night thus confirmed, he was able to control his voice and nerves as he said, coolly, to his companion, while dreading what the reply might be:

"Nelson, here's a friend of yours coming up street; better step out and speak to him."

To his immense relief, the trembling voice of his friend exclaimed at his ear:

"Great God! A ghost for sure!"

Nelson's horrified tone and perceptible shudder left no doubt of his state of mind, and it was with much satisfaction that Joyce seized the opportunity to turn several of the lawyer's gibes against him.

Ignoring these sarcasms, Nelson exclaimed again, emphatically:

"That was a ghost, as sure as I live — and I should like to see more of him."

"He'll very likely be back in ten or fifteen minutes, same as last night."

"Well, then, let's tackle him, on his way down."

They shook hands, and neither spoke again until they had reached the sidewalk, where, three blocks farther down, they concealed themselves in the deep shadows of a spacious doorway and awaited the expected return of the midnight visitant.

No one who has not had a similar experience can fully comprehend the thrill of suspense at such a time. He may have sought a human foe, in the open or in ambush, have stood guard at a solitary camp fire in the silent night, or passed a weary vigil in the jungle, prepared to meet any form of savage beast, but he is still a stranger to the sensation that comes to him who, in firm belief, awaits the coming of a midnight ghost.

As the passage of the cable cars on their trip next after midnight had heralded the return of the spectre on the previous night, Joyce warned his friend to be prepared for that event.

"After the car has gone and the coast is clear and quiet, go for it," he commanded.

"You bet!" was the answer, "and don't forget to be quick on the trigger."

At that instant a sharp tapping on a window, apparently a block above them, met their ears, and at the same time they saw

the downward car mounting the hillside. As it approached, the noise increased to a loud rattle and then suddenly stopped. The car had no sooner passed and the hill become bare than the ghost appeared at the summit, gliding swiftly in mid-air, as on the previous occasions.

"There he comes!" the watchers exclaimed together, in excited whispers. "Remember now," whispered Nelson, "the moment he gets close enough we'll rush out, and when I say, 'Shoot!' you pump lead into that snowy skull, while I ladle some pellets between his ribs. Let him have it six times in succession. And don't forget, it's got to be all accidental, — we were frenzied with fear and shot in self-defence. Don't forget that, for we may have to swear to it."

By this time the skeleton was flying toward the block in which they were concealed.

"Now, then, rush for the middle of the street!"

They rushed, experiencing an awful moment, but when still within some feet of the apparition, a dark figure, armed with a long club, darted suddenly from a doorway on the opposite side of the street, and in another moment the spectre lay prostrate on the ground. Before the ghost hunters fully realized what had happened, they stood, breathless, behind the newcomer, as he, unconscious of their presence, stooped over his fallen quarry.

"What are you doing here?" sternly demanded Nelson, grasping the ghost-destroyer by the arm. Starting at the touch, the latter sprang forward in a frantic attempt to escape, but finding himself hopelessly detained, he stood staring wildly at his captors. "Speak. What are you doing here?" repeated the lawyer.

"Him not my glost," was the meek reply, in the trembling tones of a frightened Chinaman.

"Oh, very well. Pick him up and come with us; you are our prisoner."

Without further words, the terrified Chinaman, carrying his prize, was placed between his captors and marched quickly to Kearney Street, near by, where, behind locked doors, the two friends proceeded to investigate an affair that had excited and agitated them as nothing had ever done before.

Prostrate upon the floor, flat and motionless, their previously formidable foe was no longer impressive. True, the skull and skeleton arm, chalked to a ghastly whiteness, were still suggestive of horror, but when the drapery was lifted the anatomy disclosed was of such ludicrous simplicity and harmlessness that the astonishment of the inquisitors brought a faint smile even to the pale yellow face of the frightened heathen.

Briefly described, the plan and specifications of the ghost were as follows: A human skull was securely attached to one end of a piece of inch gas pipe twelve feet long. The other end of the pipe was flattened out, to permit its passing readily through the grip slot of the cable road, and was provided with a pair of self-acting spring nippers, ingeniously constructed of nickel, and so affixed as to act in the capacity of a grip. Front and rear guards held the structure upright. Just below the skull the pipe passed through a strip of board, two feet long by three inches wide, which served as shoulders. Over this the white shroud, which fell to within two feet of the ground, was loosely draped, while to one end of the strip the skeleton arm was fastened. Lower down, at right angles with the first, was a second board, with rounded ends, which served to give the drapery a natural spread, as well as to prevent a fracture of the skull when the figure was suddenly felled by its operators, as the two friends had seen it.

"John," said Joyce, after the examination had been made, "look at these two revolvers, and then tell us what you've got to say for yourself."

"Him not my glost," repeated the Chinaman, sullenly.

"Whose is it, then?"

"Him Wun Lung glost."

"Who is Wun Lung, and where does he live?"

"Him no livee — him dead."

"Oh! So this is his ghost. Why did you knock it down?"

"Wun Lung say, 'go catchee glost.'"

"Here!" interrupted Nelson, "you just said Wun Lung was dead."

Joyce waved his hand with some impatience. "What's your name?" he continued.

"My name Sing Lo — me velly good cook — me —"



"Hold on, Lo. Nelson, I'll match you pennies to see which of us is to give Sing Lo a dollar to tell us the whole story about the ghost."

"I'll go you," grumbled the lawyer, "but it isn't good law."

"Here you are, Sing Lo. Here's your dollar—now tell us everything, and we'll let you go."

"You givee me back Wun Lung glost?"

"Yes—go ahead."

This assurance, with the sight of the broad coin and the disappearance of the pistols, worked wonders with the hitherto quaking and evasive laundryman, and in his best English and most straightforward manner—circumlocutory as it was—he related the particulars of an interesting tale.

It appeared that Wun Lung—whose mortal remains the ingenious contrivance captured had been meant to simulate—had been the proprietor of a laundry on Dupont Street, a profitable spot, the site of which appealed to Michael O'Brien, a local politician, as very desirable for the location of a saloon, but his offer to purchase was declined and his threats disregarded. The disappointed Irishman therefore proceeded to extreme measures, broke up the laundry and shot the owner, who was Sing Lo's employer, but was promptly released with a five-dollar fine by a compatriot on the bench, on the ground of self-defense. When O'Brien established his residence and saloon on the dead Chinaman's premises, a junior Wun Lung conceived the ingenious idea of frightening the murderer away with the "ghost" of his victim. The ghastly dummy was constructed and sent flying up and down the hill at midnight, being attached to and removed from the cable by Sing Lo and his fellow-laundryman, Ah Wing, while Wun Lung himself roused the saloon keeper from drunken slumber by a sharp tapping on his window by means of a "tick-tack," as boys call an ingenious combination of string, pin, and nail. The appeal to the fears of O'Brien and the identity of the spectre were emphasized by the solitary bleached hand of the apparition, the departed Wun having had but a single arm during the latter years of his life.

"Why did your friend make this contrivance of nickel?" asked Nelson, with the instinctive inquisitiveness of his legal training.

Sing Lo grinned as he replied :

"Wun Lung say, 'Put-um nickel in slot, Ilishman see-um glost.'"

With an additional dollar, designated by Nelson as "witness fees," and with his late employer's ghost under his arm, the Chinaman was released and drifted out into the darkness of Chinatown.

Half an hour later, Joyce was on his way to the home of his friends. He paused a moment at Dupont Street, and there, near the corner, read the following sign:

MICHAEL O'BRIEN  
CHOICE WINES AND LIQUORS

Some few months afterwards, on returning from his honeymoon, which was passed among the grand scenery of Washington and Oregon, he found himself again near the corner of Dupont Street, with his bride. With a start of remembrance and recognition, he looked up. The imposing black and gold of the liquor sign had disappeared, and in its place, in gold and red, a smaller board bore the significant inscription :

WUN LUNG  
CHINESE LAUNDRY

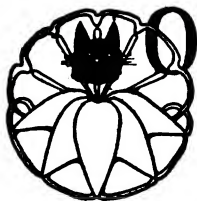
It was evident to Malcolm Joyce that on the night of his memorable adventure Mr. Michael O'Brien had taken the bony semblance of his celestial victim for The Real Thing.





## An Inherited Circus.\*

BY ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON.



NLY one question was asked in the streets of Gentryville that afternoon, and it was asked from the Court-house Square to the last corner grocery in the straggling outskirts:

"If *you* were an undertaker like Wexley Snathers, and had a circus left to you by will, what would you do with it?" When the question was worn threadbare in business circles, it was taken home to bandy around the village supper-tables, with the final insistent emphasis, "Well, what *would* you do, anyhow, if you were in Wex Snathers's place?"

It would have been an intense relief to the man in question if the village could have settled the problem for him. Nothing had ever weighed so heavily upon him, not even the responsibilities of his first personally conducted funeral occasion.

All the afternoon he sat in the rear of his little coffin shop, floundering again and again through the confusing phrases of a legal document spread out before him. It notified him of the death of one Mortimer Napoleon Bennet, a travelling showman, who had left him heir to possessions valued at several thousands of dollars.

So bewildering was the unexpected news and the legal terms in which it was conveyed, that it was some time before Wexley's slow brain grasped the fact that the deceased was not a stranger, but only red-headed "Pole" Bennet, an old playfellow, who had run away from home over thirty years before. Next, his stumpy forefinger guided his spectacles twice through the entire document before he realized that *he* was now the owner of all the ungodly goods and chattels enumerated therein.

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\* The writer of this story received a cash prize of \$125 in THE BLACK CAT story contest ending February 26, 1902.

"Lordy!" he groaned, as he checked off the various items 'Me, a deacon in the church, to be ownin' four gilded circus chariots and a steam calliope, to say nothin' of a trick elephant and a pair of dancin' cinnamon bears. It's downright scandalous! Pole always *was* a-gittin' me into hot water. *Meant* all right! Had a heart as big as a meetin' house, but he was at the bottom of every lickin' I ever got in my life. Mebbe not havin' any next of kin, he felt he sorter owed it to me to make me his heir."

Again his finger travelled slowly down the page to the clause in which three freaks connected with the side shows were especially commended to his care — an armless dwarf and the Wild Twins of Borneo. The lawyer's letter explained that they had long been pensioners upon the bounty of the deceased, and had the promise of the dying man that "Wex" would be good to them.

"Bug the luck!" groaned the undertaker, as the full meaning of this clause also dawned upon him. "Guardeen to an armless dwarf and two wild twins of Borneo! Pole oughtn't to 'a' done me that way. I'll be the laughing stock of the town, and that'll ruin my chances forever with Sade."

Glowering over his spectacles, he leaned through the open window and spat testily out into the cluttered back yard. It was some time before he drew in his shoulders. When a diffident old bachelor has obstinately courted a girl for a decade, he naturally falls into the habit of determining every act of his life by the effect it will have upon her.

In this case he could not imagine what effect his queer legacy would have upon Sade Cooper, the comely, capable spinster of his dreams. She had made up her mind to marry Wexley Snathers some day, for in the stout, sandy-whiskered little undertaker she recognized an honest soul of rare worth. On the occasion of his latest proposal, several weeks before, she had given him the reason for her repeated refusals:—

"I never could get along with your ma, Wexley. If you had enough to keep me in one house and old Mis' Snathers in another, I might think of marrying you. But she'd try to get me under her thumb, same as she's always held you, and your pa before you, and you know I never could stand that, so you might as well save your breath on that question."

Wexley realized the hopelessness of his suit, if that was what stood in the way, and since Sade's outspoken confession he had almost prayed for an epidemic to smite the healthy little village, that the undertaking business might prove more lucrative.

Now, as he sat with his head out of the window, breathing in the sweetness of an old plum tree in bloom by the pump, he began to wonder if this unexpected legacy would not solve all his difficulties. If the circus could be made the stepping-stone for his desires without making him ridiculous, or offending Sade's Puritan conscience, then Pole would indeed have proved himself, for once, the greatest of benefactors.

The spring breeze bore to his senses the odor of the plum-blossoms and the shouts of boys playing ball on the commons. "Poor old Pole!" he sighed, following the odor and the sound backward through nearly forty other springtimes, to the first and only circus he had ever attended. He and Pole had run away to see it, in days when shows were forbidden ground. How vividly he remembered the whole glittering pageant, from the gaily caparisoned horses with their nodding red plumes, down through the gilded coaches, with mirror panels, to the last painted fool, riding backward on his donkey.

The sudden opening of the shop door rang a bell above his head. He started guiltily, jerking in his head in such haste that he struck it with a bang against the window sash. His first impulse was to sweep the papers on his desk out of sight, but as he recognized the voice of the genial drummer who kept him supplied with coffin plates and trimmings, he was overpowered by a longing to unburden his soul. So strong was the desire that he yielded to it incontinently, and leaning over the counter and fixing his anxious little eyes on the drummer he almost whispered:—

"Between you and me and the gate-post, Bailey, what would *you* do if you had a circus left you by will?"

The drummer's laugh at what he supposed was intended for a joke was checked in the middle by the tragic earnestness of the questioner, who with a wiggle of his thumb beckoned him mysteriously to inspect the legal papers.

"There!" said he, "set down and give me your advice."

Seeing that the time for selling coffin-plates was not yet come, Bailey gave his attention to discovering on which side Snathers preferred the advice to fall, and being as voluble in giving advice as in the selling of goods, it was not long before he had nearly convinced his customer that, as a side-line to the undertaking business, there was nothing on earth so desirable as a circus. "Sell it?" he exclaimed in conclusion, "Not by a jugful! It will make your fortune, Snathers, sure."

"But it will make talk," protested Wex, going back to his first argument with the provoking tenacity of slow minds. "I'm afraid it will hurt the undertaking, for there'll be them as will say they wouldn't have a showman performin' the last solemn rites for them, an' there'll be others to say a man has no right to carry on a business that's a stumblin' block and an offense." He was thinking of Sade.

"Oh, that doesn't cut any ice," answered the drummer, cheerfully, as he closed the door behind him, "Go in and win!"

The news travelled fast and before dark Wex had been advised to sell his circus, to run it on shares, to have the animals killed and stuffed as a nucleus for a village museum. He was assured of success, warned of ignominious failure, congratulated on his luck and condoled with for the burden laid upon him. He was admonished that it was his Christian duty to refuse the legacy, and told by his next visitor that he would be a darn fool if he did.

He had aged visibly when he reached home, where he knew the news had preceded him by the voice of his mother in the kitchen, high and shrill above the sputter of the frying fat. She stood, hawk-eyed and hawk-nosed, fork in hand, talking to some one in the back door.

"Well," she was saying, decidedly, "there was never a Snathers yit, far as I know, that even went to a circus, and no son of mine shall own one if I have *my* say."

The answering voice was as decided as her own, provokingly cool and deliberate, but the sweetest of all sounds to the anxious eavesdropper. He flushed to the roots of his sandy hair and clutched nervously at his stubby beard. It was Sade's voice.

She had heard the news and had run in the back way, in neighborly village fashion, to ask if it were really true. He waited breathlessly for her answer:—

“And *I* think Wex’d feel he was flying straight into the face of Providence not to make all he could out of it, even if he had to run it himself for awhile.” Then, startled by the sneeze that betrayed Wexley’s presence, she said good-bye so hurriedly that he had only a glimpse of a white sunbonnet, fluttering around the corner.

Armed with this sanction, Wexley called that evening at the Cooper cottage, where Sade kept house for a decrepit great-aunt. But she had heard wild rumors in the meantime—the possibility of his adopting the armless dwarf and the wild twins of Borneo, in case the show business did not pay. But on being anxiously assured that there was nothing whatever to fear in that direction if she would only marry him, she confessed that she did not approve of his running a circus any more than his mother did. It was only her chronic disability to agree with old Mis’ Snathers that made her say it.

So it was with a sorely troubled heart and brain that Wexley took up the burden of life again next day. He had a funeral to conduct at ten o’clock, and he began it in such an absent-minded way that he might have made scandalous mistakes, had not the officiating clergyman’s text—Jeremiah, xii: 9,—delivered in a high, nasal drawl, brought him to a sudden decision: “Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird. The birds round about are against her.” Yes, even Sade! And such is the perversity of human nature that it stirred him to espouse the cause of his speckled bird. As he led the slow procession out to the cemetery, something followed him other than the hearse and the long line of carriages;—in that shadowy procession of fancy, black hearse-plumes gave place to the nod, nodding of red-plumed chariot horses. If there was anything Wexley Snathers particularly prided himself upon, it was the effective arrangement of funeral processions, and at the tempting thought of the scope for his genius circus parades would afford, the battle with his conscience was won. All the past called out loudly not to venture on any road where Pole Bennet’s feet had left a track, but three days

later — hoping that old Mr. Hill would hold on to life until his return — the troubled undertaker locked the door of his little coffin shop and fared forth to claim his heritage.

It is not often that a dying man leaves his earthly affairs so thoroughly provided for as did Napoleon Bennet, yet that astute showman reckoned without an important element of his problem when he thought to put the armless dwarf in his old playfellow's care. He had not counted on the twist in her little warped brain, — a superstitious dread that amounted almost to mania. She was afraid of undertakers or anything connected with their gruesome business. A cold terror seized her when she learned she was about to fall into the hands of a man on intimate terms with Death and his pale horse and, with the cunning of her kind, she began laying plans that would work his undoing.

Wexley first saw her sitting on a table, practising her one accomplishment, writing her autograph with her toes. "Be thankful for your arms. Jane Hutchins," she penned in round, childish script.

"Blest if it ain't better than I could do myself with both hands," declared Wexley, admiringly. Then, remembering what Pole had promised about his being good to the tiny creature, he patted her kindly on the head. She drew back with an inarticulate cry of alarm, turning upon him the face of a woman of thirty. A wild look of aversion gleamed in her little beady eyes.

It was the man's turn to draw back perplexed. He was beginning to feel like a fish out of water — powerless to cope with the emergencies of the show business. His employees had not been long in taking his measure. The fat lady, the living skeleton and the leading clown, after looking him over, decamped to accept the offer of a rival showman. "He's too soft a snap for *me* to leave!" said one of the acrobats. "Why, old skull-and-cross-bones doesn't know any more about this business than a white kitten. Didn't even know he'd have to get a license to show, or the whole lay-out would be attached."

Wexley, overhearing the conversation, grew weak in the knees. He was rapidly becoming disillusioned. He had been disappointed in the street parade. All the remembered glamour was lacking. It looked tawdry and silly to his mature eyes, and he was ashamed



to be seen with it. He had just learned that the wild twins had never seen Borneo, but were only tattooed half-witted orphans whom Pole had picked up, and were not even brothers. He was puzzled to know how he had incurred the uncanny little dwarf's displeasure, but he would have been still more puzzled could he have heard her whispering hoarsely to the twins of Borneo, as she held their frightened eyes fixed on hers in a fascinated gaze: —

"Remember, you promised to do it to-night. You know just how to unlock the cages. He's a graveyard man, and if you don't let the lion eat him up, he'll put you in a box and screw the cover down." Here her voice sank to a series of husky, terrifying groans. "He'll — bury — you! In — a — deep — black — hole! And you'll *never — get — out!*"

Before dark Wexley had called on Pole's lawyer. "Advertise it for sale at half-price," he said. "I'm plumb disgusted, and want to get home. If to-night's performance hadn't been advertised so big, I wouldn't risk tryin' to give it. I'm dead sure it'll be a failure."

. . . . .  
Of that evening's performance, all that he could subsequently relate was this: "The calliope was playin', and everybody was clappin' and cheerin', and I was wavin' my old hat and cheerin' too, so pleased that the performance was turning out a success, when that old elephant, Lulu, stopped short in the ring and began to trumpet. That sorter paralyzed me. I felt in my bones that something was wrong. Then the smoke began to pour in, and somebody yelled the lion was loose. Then everything seemed to go wild. There was shoutin' and yellin' and an awful stampede. In the mix-up I got a twisted ankle, and somebody stepped on my head. That's the last thing I knew till morning."

In the morning he was lying on a hospital cot, his head bandaged and his ankle in a plaster cast. Sam McCarthy, the lion tamer, his arm in a sling, had come to inquire about him.

"Well, we found out how it happened," he told Wexley. "It was Jane's doings — the little minx actually boasted of it. She struck matches with her toes and set fire to the straw in a dozen places. How those gibbering Borneo idiots ever let the lion out

is more than *I* know, but they're strong as wildcats at times. She says she made 'em do it;—never could have happened in Bennet's time."

"I know," replied Wex, wearily. "I 'spose it was my fault that everythin' was left at loose ends, but it was all so confusin'. They didn't save much out of the wreck, did they?"

"No; we were too far out for the volunteer engine company to get there in time. Old Lulu's left, and the calliope. They got that out, and the dancing bears and the horses. But such things as coaches, clothes, and fol-de-rols are done for,—and several people who were hurt are going to bring suit."

The undertaker closed his eyes and groaned. "And no insurance. All Gentryville would have to die off before I could raise money enough to pull me out now," he murmured. "I might have known that, living or dead, Pole would get me into trouble! McCarthy!" he exclaimed, starting up, "I wish you'd send that lawyer down here to me. I want to get shut of the whole blamed business before sundown. It ought to be settled before I get any worse."

There was a crowd around the bulletin-board of the Gentryville *Chronicle*, bearing a paragraph from one of the big city dailies. People stopped to read, and pushed on with shocked faces to tell their neighbors that Wexley Snathers, trying to stop the stampede at the burning of his circus, had been fatally trampled and had since died in the hospital from internal injuries.

Old Mrs. Snathers sat in her darkened house, tense and wild-eyed, not knowing at what hour Wexley's mangled body might be laid before her. Sade refused to believe the report, until confronted with the staring headlines in which Wexley's name appeared in huge black letters. Then her remorse and self-reproach were almost more than she could endure.

It was towards night of the third day after the appearance of the bulletin that the train pulling into Gentryville bore among its passengers a tired-looking man on crutches. His head was bandaged, and his gray linen duster bore marks of a long journey.



Climbing down the steps farthest from the station, he swung himself along on his crutches toward the little coffin shop, and the smell of varnish that met him on entering was like the greeting of an old friend. Ignorant of the impression current about his death, he had gone first to the shop to get his bearings before meeting the eye and tongue of the village public.

Sitting beside the open back window, his first feeling was one of relief. The circus was a thing of the past. The lawyer had assured him that by some hook or crook, best known to his profession, he could undertake to settle all suits to the satisfaction of his client. He had also undertaken to consign the freaks to some public institution for the feeble-minded, and for his services he was willing to accept the very things that had grown to be the bane of Wexley's existence, — the remnants of the circus.

Here he was at last, a free man, although with a sore head and a sprained ankle. The next thought was not so pleasant. He was farther from winning Sade than he had ever been before, by the whole amount of his doctors' bills and travelling expenses. Had it not been for his feeling that it was almost sacrilege to curse a dead man, he would then and there have anathematized Pole with a glad heart but with a vicious gnashing of teeth.

As he sat there in the deepening spring twilight, a tall comely figure came through the little gate at the side of his shop and started across his back yard. It was the short cut towards his home. He started forward eagerly as he recognized the familiar outlines in the dusk, and the slow sweep of skirts. He did not stop to wonder why she should be going to his mother's just then. His only feeling was joy that his eyes rested upon her. It seemed years since he had seen her last. He knocked on the window-pane to attract her attention.

"Sade! Oh, Sade!" he cried, leaning out of the window, his linen duster gleaming ghostly gray in the twilight.

The startling apparition, looming thus suddenly out of the coffin shop, froze the woman's very soul. With a terrified cry she sank weakly in a heap on the ground, and sat there shivering and gibbering, tears of fright streaming down her cold face.

"Lord 'a' mercy, Sade! What's the matter?" he cried, stumbling over his crutches in his haste to unbolt the back door and

get to her. As he attempted to raise her she fell limply against him, fainting.

"Be thankful for your arms. Jane Hutchins," chuckled Wexley under his breath, as he realized that for the first time in his long wooing his arms were actually around her, and he half carried, half dragged her to the door-step.

Sade was not given to hysterics, but her fright at seeing what she supposed was Wexley's spirit, and the relief at finding him so very much in the flesh kept her sobbing and laughing alternately for some time. And the time was all too short for the man who listened to her tearful confession of remorse.

As he helped her to her feet he said solemnly: "I'll forgive Pole now for all the trouble he ever got me into. Since this circus affair has made you change your mind, it's the best job he ever did in his life."

He repeated the remark to his mother afterwards. "Humph! you hain't lived with her yit," she sniffed. Wexley whistled softly as he rubbed up his best sample coffin-plate, with which he intended to adorn the parlor wall, as is the fashion of Gentryville. He would hang it up on his wedding day, in grateful memory of his benefactor, with the name "Mortimer Napoleon Bennet" engraved upon it. At present it bore on its shining surface in large ornate letters only the inscription, "Rest in Peace."



## Edward Hunt's Publishers.\*

BY ISABELLE PIERSON.



IT was near the close of the short November day, and I was reaching up to turn on the electric light, when Mr. Davis, my friend and chief, paused beside my desk.

"Have you heard from Edward Hunt?" he asked.

"A new story — better than anything he has given us. He has taken no notice of my letters, however."

"I'll warrant you, Harris, he is a queerer genius than any you ever interviewed in your reporter days," Mr. Davis said.

"I am confident of that," I answered, without reviewing former experiences. "I wish I could get hold of him for five minutes or more."

"You'd better make it more," Mr. Davis suggested. "November is not the pleasantest month in which to take a vacation," he went on, "but you've stayed by the stuff all summer, and if you care to combine pleasure with business, you may as well run up to Pine Corners and spend a week or ten days getting acquainted with our friend there. You'll have a fine opportunity to do some shooting as well."

"If I can be spared that long," I began, doubtfully.

"There is no reason why you cannot. I shall expect you to get something big from Edward Hunt. Search his waste-basket. Talk him into a serial. Get his consent to a collection of short stories — anything you can. He's a genius, and we evidently have a monopoly of him."

So it came about that two days later I found myself surrounded by a company of idlers who, with rolls of calico and barrels of molasses, along with the odor of stale codfish, served to give character to the one store at Pine Corners, interviewing the post-

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master and storekeeper, a quiet, elderly man, who stood behind his pigeonholes and courteously answered my questions.

"Mr. Hunt? He lives at Rockdale, twelve miles down the valley road. Yes, you can hire a wheel of Hank Ammermon, the blacksmith, though the stage goes down there at six o'clock. No, Mr. Hunt never comes here himself, a young lady, his niece I believe, comes on her wheel to get the mail. Yes, there's a post-office at Rockdale. I don't know why they use this. The old man's mighty queer, I guess."

I thanked my informant, and, after securing a wheel from the blacksmith, rode down the valley between twisted fences where blackberry vines sprawled their briery lengths along the gray rails, and clumps of brilliant sumach vied in color with the poisonous mercury that stretched in scarlet masses at the edges of the corn-fields. Yellow pumpkins gleamed between the stacked corn-stalks, and here and there among the bare branches the forest trees on the hillsides flaunted banners of autumnal glory. It was all very beautiful, and I found myself growing enthusiastic over New York State in November. As I passed beneath some pine trees I detected a note of warning in the sighing of the wind among the branches, and for the first time noticed that a coming storm was darkening the rosy haze of the Indian summer. I had been watching a small church spire that gleamed white against a background of autumn coloring, and a turn in the road revealed a tiny village resting at the foot of the hills. "Rockdale, of course," I said, and waited for a lumbering wagon, filled with barrels, to overtake me.

"Hunt?" the driver said, without stopping his horses. "That's his house there on the hill. You'll have to go through that field to get to it. I must get home. It's going to rain."

He drove noisily on, and the wind blew cold in a sudden gale over a country grown strangely sombre and dreary. The milk-weed bushes on the roadside rattled their empty pods dismally, for the vandal wind had stolen away their white children.

As I pushed my wheel up the bank and into the field the narrow path became suddenly speckled with large rain-drops. They slipped along the hazel branches and fell with a cold splash against my wheel and on my hands.

Near the top of the hill I paused in amazement. Before me was a comfortable, old-fashioned farmhouse, broad and low, like many others I had passed in my ride, but some one had taken the gray stone of the hills and had built what seemed to be a Gothic hall or chapel. Stately and beautiful it towered above the modest old dwelling at its side, its high arched windows looking out from the branches of a splendid old elm tree. As I looked, a young girl stepped from the doorway of the farmhouse out on the low porch. There were sprays of golden-rod at her belt, and their gold seemed to shine again in the brown of her hair. I saw that one soft strand was being blown across her cheek, and noticed the strength and grace of the slender form as she stood poised before the wind.

"It is beginning to rain now, uncle. You are a good weather prophet. How could you know this morning that a storm was coming?"

She called to some one within the house, and then turning, saw me. I hastened forward and presented my card. "I came to see Mr. Hunt," I began, "I represent his publishers."

"Yes, I understand," she said, interrupting me and speaking quickly, while her eyes dilated as if she had been startled. "Please do not speak of this to my uncle. Do not mention his work until I can explain. We shall be glad to give you shelter. Uncle Edward, this is Mr. Clark from New York. He came near being caught in the rain."

She handed my card to an elderly man who had come to the door. To my astonishment he read it with no sign of recognition; but turned to me with fine courtesy and said: "You are welcome Mr. Clark. We have few visitors here. Will you come in? You see it is raining hard now. You would not have had time to have reached the village without getting wet."

Seated in a cozy parlor, with the rain beating outside, I had ample opportunity to observe my host, and was in no way disappointed in the man whose work had done so much for the magazine I represented. I looked with admiration at the splendid head, covered with soft white hair, so long as to be almost shaggy. His beard was white; and from beneath heavy gray eyebrows looked dark eyes filled with a dreamy expression, as if they saw much that was beyond the ken of other eyes.

"No;" he said, in answer to a question of mine. "Our hills are too far removed from the towns to have been discovered by the summer people. I am selfish enough to wish their solitude to remain unbroken; but I fear the life here is a lonely one for my niece, though Marian never complains. She is my brother's daughter, and she came here from college to cheer her old hermit of an uncle." He smiled most lovingly into the girl's eyes.

"The task has been a pleasant one," she said, rising. "Shall we go to the sitting-room? I think it is warmer there."

Pushing aside the heavy curtains that hung at one end of the parlor, she led the way into a room somewhat smaller; but very daintily and comfortably furnished.

"You see, Marian has been making the house over," the old man said, touching the sofa pillows piled high on a couch by the window.

"You have my colors here," I said, picking up the orange and black pillow.

"How delightful!" Miss Hunt exclaimed. "I've always liked them. These are mine, and there uncle has his!"

We talked of college and university life while the twilight deepened and the rain fell outside. An old colored man brought in lights and stirred the fire burning in an open grate.

"Jackson, tell Ophelia to have supper a little earlier to-night. I have an engagement," Mr. Hunt said to the old servant.

"Oh! uncle, must you go to-night?" remonstrated his niece. "I want you here."

"My dear, it is very important. Mr. Clark will excuse me. You can entertain him, and Jackson will show him his room. You see, sir," turning to me, "I am to meet some friends and I must not disappoint them. Matters of profound importance are to be decided to-night."

"Do you expect many?" Marian asked.

"Eight or ten, possibly a dozen," was the answer. "Now, my dear, can you not give us some music?"

Pushing back the curtains Marian went to the piano in the parlor and began to play softly. I had not recovered from my amazement at the old man's words, and I sat wondering about his friends. Whom could he expect on so stormy a night? Was it

possible that such a man could find a dozen congenial companions in this remote place? And what were the matters of importance to be decided?

I abruptly ceased to ponder these questions, for the girl in the next room was singing. Her voice was contralto, rich and sympathetic in quality, and must have been carefully cultivated. I at once gave myself over to the pleasure of listening to her. Hungry as I was after my ride I almost resented the interruption when the old colored man announced supper. Marian came back into the sitting-room, smiling and blinking a little in the light. We followed her to a low-ceiled dining-room, where we were waited upon by a stout, good-natured negress, evidently Jackson's wife. I had travelled in the South and recognized several of the dishes served as decidedly Southern. I noticed now that a slight peculiarity in the speech of these people was suggestive of the South. My host grew quiet and abstracted as the meal progressed, and at its close excused himself and hurried away.

"Does he go far? It is raining very hard," I said, looking to Marian for some solution to the mystery.

"He does not go out at all," she said. "He meets his friends in the library. There is a closed passage leading to it."

She had grown pale and her eyes were troubled. When we were again in the sitting-room she turned to me with the abrupt query, "Does my uncle appear to you to be insane?"

Startling as was this question, I managed to answer with composure, "Not at all."

"I can never believe he is insane," she went on, speaking slowly, "and yet, the guests he expects to-night, and whom he often entertains, are ghosts—the spirits of men who once lived on this earth and who died, some of them, centuries ago."

I could only hold on to the arms of my chair and stare at her as she continued: "They have formed a great literary federation. All the great writers who have lived from the beginning of time belong to it. Somewhere in the other world they are writing and publishing their work for a spirit world to read."

There was a little hysterical catch in her voice and her gray eyes were very dark and beautiful.

"Sometimes I think it must be true, it is all so real to my



uncle. He writes only for them, and he believes that all he has written has been published there in the spirit world. He is greatly honored in that while he is still a mortal, they have made him one of them."

"But we have been printing his stories for nearly three years," I said.

"I sent them to you," she answered, the color coming back to her face. "I stole into his library and borrowed his manuscripts and copied them. I afterward returned them. He has hundreds of them tied up and packed away."

"And he knows nothing of the fame they have brought him?"

"He cares nothing for earthly fame. He knows his work is good; but he has always refused to send it to a publisher. He believes that everything he has written has been published in another world, and that he ranks very high there." She smiled as she went on.

"Spirits, however, do not pay in material currency, and my uncle had spent all his fortune on his library. My father had left me enough to carry me through college; but feeling sure that I in time must earn my own living, I studied stenography and typewriting. My only relatives were a maiden aunt, my mother's sister, living in the South, and my uncle here. My aunt invited me to live with her, but when I came up here on a visit I saw how very much my uncle needed me. He had brought Jackson and Ophelia North with him years before, and they had done the best they could for him; but the place looked very forlorn and comfortless. Uncle had thought only of his library. I had not been here three months when I discovered that his bank account was very low. I tried to talk with him about it; but he was very busy working on a story of Florence in Dante's time, and Dante was giving him particulars about the city and people. Fancy having a friendly chat with the ghost of the Florentine poet!"

Marian laughed, and I said, "It is strange, but his genius in depicting scenes in almost every century of the Christian era is marvelous."

"I know it," she answered, "but I had thought it was because of his reading. He lives among his books and his mind is so



constantly on them and on his work that he seems to have lost all interest in practical matters of every-day life. I saw that it would soon be a question of bread and butter for us all, so I took matters into my own hands. I had brought my typewriter with me and, watching my opportunity, I took several of Uncle Edward's manuscripts from his library and copied them and sent them to you. Your firm paid so well for them that I have been sending others ever since. I used the post-office at Pine Corners, and uncle has never suspected it. It has been all my own secret and I am glad to tell it to some one." She drew a long sigh as if of relief, and settled back in her chair.

"I am more than glad to share the secret," I said. "We have felt that there was something unusual about Edward Hunt, and I came up here to learn what I could. It seemed our right as his publishers. I should like to see his library. Do you think he will invite me there?"

"I am sure he will not. He holds it sacred to his visitors from the other world; but I do not think it will be wrong for me to show it to you. If we have an opportunity we will go there to-morrow. Shall I call Jackson to show you your room? You must be tired after your journey."

All through the next day the storm continued with increased fury. Mr. Hunt treated me at breakfast with kindly courtesy, and for a while seemed interested in what I had to say of the city, and of events just then taking the attention of the nation and of the world; but it was impossible to arouse him for any length of time and before the meal was over he had become lost in his own thoughts.

"I shall be very busy to-day, Mr. Clark," he said. "In addition to some work that must be finished, I have an engagement with my publishers. I trust that you will remain some time with us. My little girl is often lonely and your visit will cheer her. She will no doubt find some way to entertain you. You could sing to him, Marian."

She laughed as he turned to her with the suggestion. "You old dear," she said, patting his hand lovingly. "Do you think every one is as fond of hearing me sing as you are?"

We did not see him again that day; but if pleasant companion-

ship can make a paradise I thought I had found mine. The day seemed all too short, and when evening came we were sitting together by the fireside, and the thought uppermost in my mind was, "I have known her always, for she is my ideal woman. I have seen her often in my dreams."

After a time Mr. Hunt came from his library and sat with us. He looked white and worn, and Marian said anxiously, "You are not well, dear, you have worked too hard. You look so tired!"

"My work is done now," he said wearily. "It was very important."

At the office we had often felt the mystery of this man's life, though we knew nothing of him, and now, sitting face to face with him in the warm glow of the firelight, I felt that sense of mystery deepen. After a time he rose to go to his room.

"I must go to bed; I am very tired" he said. "Marian, will you tell Jackson that I wish him to sleep in my room to-night?"

"He never has Jackson sleep there when he is well," Marian said anxiously after he had gone.

"He has worked steadily all day, and is probably only tired," I said, trying to reassure her.

The evening was growing late; but we still lingered by the fire. Then an idea came to me. Would you — could we visit the library now?" I asked. "He may be there all day to-morrow."

"True, we may not have another chance," she said thoughtfully, "Yes, I think we may go now."

On the mantel were two fine old brass candlesticks. Marian took one of these, saying, "We will each take a candle; then we shall not have to light uncle's lamp."

I lighted the other candle and we started, a procession of two, through the parlor, across the hall, along a narrow corridor to three steps leading to a Gothic door at the end. Here my guide paused and turned to me, with one hand holding the folds of her dress as she prepared to ascend the steps. The light from the candle glorified the waves of brown hair and accentuated the beauty of the straight brows and gray eyes.

"Lo, the door of mysteries!" she said, "But your candle is out! You may light it from mine. You didn't carry it straight."

She touched my candle with the yellow flame of hers, and, ascending the steps, softly opened the door. Following her I stepped into a room so spacious, and with a ceiling so lofty, I stood amazed. Everywhere was a suggestion of the Gothic. All about the walls were bookcases filled with books. Above them hung beautiful paintings, while here and there the light half revealed an exquisite marble or costly bronze. I turned to Marian with an unspoken question. She smiled. "He had this room built years ago. He gradually gathered the books. His fortune is here."

She placed her candle on a writing-table in the centre of the room. I noticed that the table was of mahogany, and paused to examine the rich carvings representing delicate scrolls and finished at intervals with grotesque heads.

He entertains his friends about this table," she said, pointing to a number of chairs in position as if their occupants had carelessly pushed them back upon rising.

"You are sure no one has been here?" I asked, "No one from the village?"

"My uncle has only acquaintances about here, and if people call they are entertained in the parlor — never here."

I was examining the shelves of books when she moved toward the corner of the room where stood a tall clock.

"Will you bring your candle here please? The manuscripts are all in the old clock, and in this chest."

I raised the cover of a brass-bound chest, and found it filled with packages of closely written paper.

"Some of these I have copied for you. Many of them I have not read. You have had all these in the clock. She pulled open the clock door, and, with the interest one feels in original manuscripts, the contents of which have become famous, I looked over the white rolls which had been tucked in among the weights of the silent old clock. As we handled the manuscripts there was a metallic sound above our heads, and the clock began to tick slowly and majestically. It was as if an inanimate thing had suddenly come to life and spoken. We started and looked at each other.

"It hasn't ticked before in years," Marian said. "We must have started it going when we moved the weights."

She closed the door and we stood looking at the face of the clock. Both hands pointed to twelve. I took out my watch. "It is almost right," I said. "I have five minutes to twelve." Then as we stood there, still looking at the clock, though no sound save its loud ticking reached my ears, I knew that something was occurring back of me, and an instinctive consciousness that we were not the only persons in the room took possession of me. As I turned I upset the candle I had placed on the floor, and extinguished the light, leaving our end of the room in darkness. At that moment I felt Marian's hand grip my arm, and we stood together, silent and breathless. The light Marian had left on the table threw a yellow sheen over its polished surface. Seated about the table, on the line where the darkness strangled the light, were nine vague figures of men dressed in the different styles of different centuries. It seemed to me that I had in some way known them; and yet, as I looked at them, I was baffled by the fact that though they seemed to be men, they were after all but dim outlines. They were all looking toward the door, and in an expectant way, as if some one would join them ere long.

Suddenly the whole company rose to their feet. There was a movement forward as if in welcome, and then I saw for an instant the face of the new-comer. I heard a low, half gasping cry at my side, and turned quickly to Marian, who had staggered back, half fainting, against the clock. When I again looked toward the centre of the room, I saw none of that strange company. Only the candle glimmered on the polished table, half revealing the carved heads and flickering faintly over the rows of books. I supported Marian to a chair and waited for her to recover, hardly daring to speak lest the terms of endearment that sprang to my lips should escape me. The clock had stopped.

"It was Uncle Edward," Marian said after a moment, "and he has gone away with them. Did you see him?"

"You are shivering. It is very cold here," I said, evading the question. "We must go back to the fire."

As I lifted the candle the light shone on a bust of Shakespeare, and I saw again the face of one of our strange guests.

I hurried Marian back to the cozy sitting-room, and stirred the fire until I had awakened a cheery blaze; but even then the thing

we had seen did not grow less real. "He has gone with them. He must be dead," Marian said.

"Psychologists say the spirit sometimes leaves the body during sleep," I argued lamely. "He will wake in the morning as usual."

"But he looked just as they did," Marian persisted. "And didn't you see how eagerly they waited for him, and how they disappeared as soon as he came? Oh!" she finished, with a hysterical laugh, "they seem as real as if they were not ghosts."

At that moment we heard the sound of a heavy, unsteady foot-step, as if some one staggered rather than walked down the stairs and along the hall. The door leading from the dining-room opened, and Jackson stood before us, a wild, half-dressed figure, his black face working, his eyes rolling, his knees shaking so he could hardly stand.

"Massa, he daid! Massa, he daid!" he wailed over and over.

Marian hid her face in her hands. "I was sure of it," she moaned.

I quickly got Jackson into a chair, and persuaded him to tell me in few words what had happened. He had been lying on a couch, he said, but had not gone to sleep, when he saw his master rise and quietly leave the room. Then, as he raised himself and looked toward the bed, he saw that his master was still there, apparently asleep. He rose and went to the bed, only to find the still form lifeless.

"We must go to him," I said quickly. He may be only ill. Take me to his room. Miss Marian, will you remain here?"

"No; oh, no!" she said, rising, "I must go with you; perhaps I can be of use." She led the way up the stairs to her uncle's room. There was no doubt left in my mind after a brief examination. I knew that Edward Hunt was dead. But Marian wanted to send for a physician, and as the old colored man still trembled and seemed unfit to go, I started out in search of one, after calling Ophelia to care for her young mistress.

I had no great difficulty in finding the village doctor, and he at once returned through the rain with me. Mr. Hunt had been dead since midnight, he said. He promised to send his sister to remain with Marian until her aunt should come from the South.

"You will stay, will you not?" Marian said to me the next day. "He liked and trusted you, and I am sure he would want you to stay, and" — a delicate color came into her pale cheeks — "it will help me to have you here."

I consented readily enough, and Marian allowed me to take full charge of everything connected with the funeral. When the aunt, a sweet faced, refined elderly woman, came, she accepted my presence there as a matter of course, and seemed to consider me a family friend.

When we had buried Edward Hunt among the graves surrounding the church of the white steeple, I returned to the office, and Marian went South with her aunt, leaving the old farmhouse and splendid library with its books and statues, its rare paintings and valuable manuscripts, all of which she had inherited from her uncle, in charge of Jackson and Ophelia, who were to have a home in the old house as long as they lived.

Six months later I went South to claim Marian for my own, and together we travelled North to her old home beneath the Gothic windows.

"It may have been the power of a thought," I said, as I stood with my wife in the library, and we tried to explain the phenomenon we had witnessed there. "He believed that he was in communion with the great literary men of other times. He believed that he had their friendship, and that at his death he would join them, and had probably pictured his reception by them. At the moment of his death he was able to project the picture before us here where he believed the meeting would take place. You have studied psychic phenomena — does not this seem plausible?"

"Yes," she said, "and yet — I shall always feel that they were really here."

"And I shall feel," I said, taking her in my arms, "that it does not matter whether they were spirits from another world or phantoms of your uncle's brain, since they helped me to win my wife."





## By Way of the Chute.\*

BY GRACE GORRILL GOWING.



THE highway of the logs from the forested ridge to the lake was a bark-rubbed chute. All through the resin-scented summer days, the logs chased one another madly down the incline, threw themselves high in air as they felt the cooling waters of the lake, and, falling, rested on its broad bosom.

In the camp at the top of the chute, cook-house odors, mingling familiarly with forest scents, proclaimed the nearness of the supper hour. The donkey engine, from its roughly planked housing, puffed and snorted and strained as it wound the great cable over the drum. Slowly, slowly, the lengths of the cable glided up the hill, coil upon coil, the engine laid them by, till, creaking with weight of freight and passengers, the heavy logging sled crawled up the last few rods of its journey from the lake, and came to a standstill amidst the group awaiting its arrival. With a whirr and a rattle the engine finished its work.

In the front of the sled, half leaning against its load of crates and boxes, stood a man and a woman, fit children of the woods about them. In the repose of the man's body lay a mighty strength, while she beside him breathed rugged beauty. In the eyes of one alone in the group gleamed recognition, sinister eyes, the only feature in his face left untouched by a deep fire scar. Her glance unconsciously halted on his disfigurement, then passed him by, for this seamed face had no place in her memory.

The newcomers, living to themselves in a shack, removed, perhaps, a quarter of a mile from the men's quarters, wove a net of reserve around their daily life which soon led to murmuring conjecture. That Adam Blake, as he called himself, was not his right name seemed understood from the first; that he was the right sort was also understood from the day he took his place

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among them. And they treated him with the respect which lies low under a rough exterior. As for Joan, his wife, no one was ever heard to mention her lightly save Pedro, he of the scarred face, and then he spoke low, when none of the big men were near. But when he listened to the talk of how Adam did this great thing or that, or how Joan, when the boy of the gang was mangled by a crashing tree, carried him in her powerful arms into her own cabin, and cared for him, his unsightly face twisted into mirth. And though the men hungered to thrash him, he kept quiet and gave them no open cause.

It was a strange life at the camp. During the summer months the men, shut in by the forest, lived like one great family, their only communication being by way of the chute. But when winter, giving rest to the trees, drove them out, they scattered, to work, many to wander, and few to return to the old camp. And yet many a story which a man thought buried, crept in like a ghost by his side. So it was with Pedro.

The outline of the cabin was slowly merging into the shadows. Adam was off on extra work, while Joan, utilizing the remnant of daylight, spaded lustily, turning the brown leaf mold in her strip of garden. A scarlet runner, the only stranger among her wild plants, rubbed elbows with a shiny Prince's-feather fern, and nodded from its dizzy height at a spicy Yerba Buena, sprawling lazily at its feet. Joan, stooping to tear away a brown leaf, heard a footstep on the path.

"These plants are fairly jumping out of the earth," she called without turning. "That's because I take such good care of them, Adam. Adam," she repeated, "That comes quite naturally, now."

"And why shouldn't Adam come naturally?" insinuated the voice belonging to the footsteps.

Half kneeling, as she was, she turned as though jerked about. Out of his scarred face, Pedro's eyes glowed at her.

"Would Silas be easier to say? Silas Martin?" he queried.

Slowly she stood and faced him. The name he spoke touched that past in Adam's life which they had striven to hide, a time when he had been disgraced before men by circumstantial evidence,



and the lying word of one Pedro Letti. Staring at the man before her, dominated for the instant by the instinct of one at bay, she reached for the spade, where it stood upright in the soft earth. She stood fully two inches above the man before her, yet, as her strong fingers gripped the spade handle, he grinned at her.

"Not so savage; remember Adam."

Her mood changed suddenly. "Who are you, and what do you know of him?" she demanded.

"I'm Pedro, 'Pretty Pedro,' eh? when you jilted me over the range yonder," with a thumb gesture over his shoulder.

"You, *you*?" she broke in. There was a silence, while her eyes sought familiar features under his disfigurement. "But your term —" she began, finally.

"So you and Adam thought I was out of the way. Didn't know how many months I could knock off by good behavior. But I got these beauty marks there."

Still she stared. "I didn't jilt you," she said, presently, as though her mind, dulled by surprise, was but beginning to grasp his speech. "You were nothing to me." Then she thought of his old-time vanity — his jealousy which had led him to implicate Adam in his own crime — and again of the night, five years before, when Adam, taking justice in his own hands, had escaped to come to her. But she knew that, though guiltless in the eyes of his fellow-men, Law and Justice, should they find him out, still would hold him criminal.

For the first time her eyes left his face, and travelled slowly to his feet. A green inch-worm humped itself jerkily across his boot. Looking down, he, too, saw it, and in the forest silence they watched with absorbing interest its uneven course. When it had reached the ground in safety, the man raised his foot and crushed it.

"Well?" he queried.

"Well," she repeated dully, for the hope that had begun to form out of her tangled misery of thought was gone. It was not his purpose to clear Adam.

A month later the ghost of Pedro's and Adam's story had risen by the camp fire. Pedro was known as a jail bird, and while his name was bandied about with many an oath, contempt and wonder

were busy on his account. Let a man do his killing and pay his price, well and good; but let him drag an innocent man with him — and such they believed Silas Martin to be — and he was cursed for a coward. So far they reasoned logically, but what cut short their logic was his apparent friendliness with Joan.

After their first meeting he had come often to the cabin, when Adam was away, and Joan had seen his love smouldering in his eyes long before he spoke. But while the days stretched long with dread of him, she dared not send him away. Instinct told her that with all in the camp save him, Adam's story would be safe. As the weeks crawled by he managed to see much of her, and because he said no word of love nor mentioned Adam's escape, her fear of him lessened. If he made reparation by silence, she must at least be kind, so at every meeting her reserve thawed, and in her fear lest she should be unjust, she showed him more kindness than she realized.

She was standing in the door when he came one day and, with an effort, she hid her disappointment that he was not Adam.

"All the men are not off, yet?" she inquired, and the shade of wistfulness was not lost. She turned, as she spoke, bending back into the cabin, as if to search for something, for she did not wish to see his extended hand.

"Some, not all," he answered, shortly. He was intent on the blending curves of her womanhood, as she leaned through a band of yellowing sunlight.

"Some," he repeated, with a tightening of his breath.

Her startled gaze recalled him. "It's Saturday night, you know," he said, looking away from her into the clearing. "Some have gone down on the sled — to load," he added in explanation. As she made no comment, he continued: "Queer thing happened to-day. A great peeler started down the chute, and half way down, where a new hand had been putting in a section of timber, it caught, and there it'll stick till Monday morning." He spoke, with his eyes upon her, but his mind far from his words.

She stirred uneasily. She would not ask him into the cabin, and he seemed content to lean by the door and look at her.

"Suppose we sit on the porch," she ventured. Fear for Adam roused a sensation she had never know before. Fearful of over-

pleasing or, worse, of angering this man, she could not be natural. She was restless, uncertain, almost timid in his presence.

He felt the change in her and interpreted it wrongly.

"Suppose we stay inside," he said softly. Stepping swiftly over the threshold, he shut the door behind him. The band of sunlight had slipped away; the shadows had slunk into the cabin and crouched in every cranny. He heard the catch of her breath.

"Open that door," she commanded, in a voice stretched tense by strong anger held back.

Mechanically he turned and raised his hand to the latch. For the moment, her power, with all indecision gone, controlled him. He stepped upon the porch.

"Now go," she said, and as her words fell upon him, the bonds of her anger loosened. "Go! And if ever your ugly face comes my way again — God! I could kill you."

Then the man turned toward her.

"My — ugly — face," he repeated. He measured her deliberately. "One more day I'll give you, and then you'll come to me, or Adam will go back. They've hunted for him, but those who could lay finger on him hid him — lied for him. But now it's up to you."

Numb with anger and contempt she listened.

"Stands up and takes her medicine," he sneered. "To-morrow night I'll wait for you across the clearing — no, I'll wait half-way down the chute, by that log that's stuck."

She answered not.

"Damn your independence!" he muttered. "That's what makes me want you."

Still erect in the doorway, she watched him tramp down the path and into the wood-road. Then she stumbled inside and barred the door. Her anger was gone, leaving her weak and helpless as a child.

"Adam," she moaned, "Adam! Adam!" and she fumbled her way to the bunk in the corner. His coat lay sprawled on the blanket where he had thrown it. She pulled it to her, and crouching, hugged it in her arms. She smoothed its rough folds, caressed it, for it seemed to breathe of him. With a quivering sigh she laid it back on the bed.

For many minutes, writhing in the darkness, she fought the grief of a strong woman. Every tender thought of him she beat back, crushed it into the blackness of her misery, till it seemed to her she was lead, body and mind an unfeeling weight. Finally she remembered that Adam was coming, that nothing was ready for him, and with habit-guided hands she built the fire, made ready the supper and placed it on the table. Still he did not come, and with a fear lest she should again remember, she worked on, sweeping the floor, putting everything to rights in the cabin, working, working, hurrying to keep ahead of her thoughts, until his quick tread sounded on the path. For a second she listened, then, in a tumult of dread, shrank into a corner away from the light.

"Joan, Joan," he called, fumbling at the door, "what are you all locked in for?"

With her forehead pressed against the rough wall, her hands twisting and clenching her apron, she waited. "No, no," she muttered. "If I see him I can't leave him. I can't — I —"

"Joan!" The sharp anxiety in his voice roused her. She crossed the room, and, pulling up the heavy bar, opened the door. She stood before him, her hands nervously plucking at the folds of his flannel shirt, her eyes down that he might not read the misery in them. Then her hands stole up, over his close-clipped hair, over his face, with the soft touch of a blind person who would see a well-loved one. And so she made her silent good-bye.

. . . . .

Through the night and the first morning hours, she struggled with the dread of what was before her. Facing her sacrifice in all its hideous detail, she weakened for a time. Then the whole force of her love for Adam came upon her, and gave her strength. Herself for Adam's freedom, far more to give than life, and yet it should be given.

Worn with the struggle, she left the cabin and walked down the path, along the road with its ragged border of dust-laden asters and sun-browned goldenrod, into the shade of the forest — a skeleton forest, from which all the vigorous, straight-limbed trees were gone, leaving only the stumps and striplings. Half a mile into the wood, she caught a glint of the lake, lying far below. With quickening steps she turned out of the road, and brushing

through the sparse undergrowth, heedless of clinging thorns, went down the steep incline, with slipping, stumbling steps. A strange desire possessed her, that desire which leads one to tamper with pain. Turning at right angles along the hillside, she walked toward the chute. The log was half-way down, he had said. She would look at it while she was still free to come and go. A few yards farther, and looking ahead and down, she could see a section of the smooth, greased trough, the huge trunk of a sugar pine, the upper end, hidden by a scrub growth in front of her, resting in its slippery grasp. Arrested mid-way in its plunge, held captive by a rough joint in the trough, it lay. The power of an engine, or the force of a man's foot might send it grinding down to the lake. Urged by the morbid interest a man condemned might take in the erection of his gallows, she pushed aside the branches, and, struggling through, stood beside the chute.

So near that she had but to put out her arm to touch him, lay a man, stretched prone upon the bank, close to the ribbed side of the log. His arms were folded, his face hidden in them. Even so, she knew him, and, with recognition, her one idea was to get away before he could see her. Still a few hours remained before she was to meet him, and, dreary as they had looked, they were priceless when she thought of those to come. Instinctively she knew, should he see her now, that those hours would be denied her. A hurried glance showed her that her only chance to slip quietly away was to pass him, follow up the chute a few yards, till she reached an opening in the brush. With her eyes on his bent head, she made a stealthy motion forward. A stone turned under her foot. Still he did not stir. For a second she looked down to pick her next step, then cautiously she advanced one foot — both feet. She must press close by him to escape the clutching twigs. With a side glance she bent forward, but, even as she did so, his head turned and he opened his eyes full upon her. Cornered between him and the brush, she went neither forward nor back.

A few seconds he looked at her. For in fear or anger or love, she was one upon whom men could feed their eyes, with little need for speaking. She stood now, her eyes wide, her lips parted, her head slightly lowered, as she pressed back into the prodding bushes. She could not move without coming nearer to him. But

even as he looked, she raised her head defiantly. As for him, he realized the advantage of his position and held it.

"So," he said, half rising on his elbow, "you couldn't wait till the time — you came early." A pause, then: "Why did you come, I wonder? As I did, to look on the place we should meet to-night?"

She made no reply, and suddenly his mocking manner left him.

"Joan," he said, eagerly, "Why did you come now? Is it love, Joan? I had thought — you haven't been so offish lately till last night."

"Love and *you*!" she interrupted.

"As you like," he growled. "Hate and me, if you will, but *me*, Joan."

With a swift motion she attempted to pass him, but, clutching her skirt, he held her.

"Not so fast!" he muttered.

"God! Let me go!" she panted. "It's not time — not time I will not come."

"My time," he answered. Still keeping his hold on her, he made as if to rise, but his coat, catching on a splintered knot of the great log in the flume, held him. Jerking about to free himself, he put his shoulder to the log. There was a quiver, a rasping groan of bark on bark, and the tree moved. The shock of his weight against it, the diminishing endurance of the obstacle which blocked it, either might have precipitated its descent. It moved slowly, and, realizing no danger, he made as if to slip from his coat, but, as he bent forward, its motion quickened. An oath burst from him. As he struggled the log careened, throwing him half over its side, and there he hung. For a breathing space his startled eyes rested on the woman's face, and even in that eternal second, he read a flashing hatred mingled with its horror. Then, trimming, with its helpless freight, the forest giant shot forward and roared down the polished ways, while the woman watched — then listened to its mighty meeting with the waters



## The Waters of the Gulf.\*

BY T. WORCESTER WORRELL.



HAT a tableau! There, knee deep in water, stood the Rector, book in hand, prepared to read the service for the dying; with bowed heads, some kneeling in the flood, were grouped the men and women who that morning had set out so gaily from the Texan capital; a deserted train; a helpless man beneath the foot-board of an overturned engine; a rising tide that soon must still the victim's gasping.

"Jack, don't let me drown!"

"No, Pard."

A dreadful storm has swept low-lying Texas. The waters of the Gulf, outspread for miles, are gathering their tithes of town and ranch and living thing. The turbid flood has reached the road-bed of the "G. & A." Summit lies a good ten miles behind us — 'tis only five to Crockett. What are five miles to us! Do we not have the fastest engine and the finest train in Lone Star State?

A jolt — a sudden stop! The conductor hurries forward through our car. Two cowboys join the trainmen by our derailed engine. "We'll have a tedious wait, that's all — no danger threatens." Good humor reigns; a new experience enjoyable to tell.

What caused that monstrous wave — that screeching hiss?

By Heaven, the sodden ground has given way; the engine's overturned. "Is no one hurt?" No — yes! A cowboy crushed to earth — he cannot rise.

"Help! Help!" The train is emptied. There is no help. The strength of all this company would not suffice to move the iron monster. The man is doomed! The water laves his chest; it laps his throat; it rises still!

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"Jack, don't let me drown!"

"No, Pard," and a sinewy, sun-browned hand draws forth a pistol from its holster.

The man of God invokes Divine assistance; the water seals its victim's lips.

Jack gropes under water till he finds his comrade's hand — a gentle pressure — a mute farewell. He cocks his pistol and, pressing its muzzle against the head that I support, he turns his face away. The service is begun. A piercing scream!

"Peace, woman!"

"He shall not die — he can be saved! Come, help me!"

All is wild confusion. Women shriek, men rush aimlessly around. A few, regaining their wits, follow the young teacher to the train, and they almost instantly return, bearing a box of clay. She, with swift, accustomed fingers, covers the head of the unfortunate man and upwards molds a cylinder that shuts out the water. The man is saved!

Led by the Rector we sing "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow" with a fervency and a meaning that I never before experienced.

. . . . .

The waters rose a few inches and then subsided rapidly. A wrecking train arrived and "Pard" was released.

There can be but one ending to a tale like this. No man can put asunder the two souls brought together by the Waters of the Gulf.





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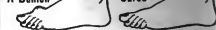
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## THE WORLD'S FAIR CONTEST CO., 6801 DELMAR AVENUE, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

NOTICE.—Contestants are distinctly to understand that participation in this prize contest is not confined to subscribers for any one paper, but that the contest is being advertised in a large number of other publications, the subscribers for all of which are privileged to compete and share in the distribution of the prizes offered.

# 89 CENTS FOR A NEW 1905 HEATING STOVE

**HOW WE CAN SELL** a new 1905 model high grade heating stove under our **BINDING GUARANTEE** for only **EIGHTY NINE CENTS**. Not a deposit of 25 cents, with something to pay later on, but just 89 cents to pay; no more, no less. **HOW** we can do it and **WHY** we do it is fully explained in our **NEW FREE 1905 SPECIAL STOVE CATALOGUE**. Just eat, **OUR FREE STOVE CATALOGUE** illustrates and describes our New 1905 Style Heating Stove, which we sell for 25 cents; explains our new and marvelously low price making policy, illustrates and describes an almost endless variety of Heating and Cooking Stoves, all kinds and styles of Hard Coal, Soft Coal and Wood burning **HEATING STOVES**. **EVERYTHING** in **STOVES** at prices so astonishingly low that you will be surprised and pleased.

## OUR FREE CATALOGUE

explains our **30 Days' Free Trial Plan, our Pay After Received Terms**, our **Sale Delivery Guarantee**, explains our **Binding Quality Guarantee**, explains our plan of shipping the day your order is received, so you will only have to wait a few days; tells how we make freight charges very low no matter in what state you live. **OUR FREE CATALOGUE** shows an illustration of our own stove foundry, the largest in the world; tells all about why we can make prices on all kinds of stoves so very much lower than any other house.

**OUR FREE CATALOGUE** is the largest, handsomest, best illustrated, most interesting and **MOST COMPLETE** special stove catalogue ever published and tells everything known about stoves. **WRITE FOR OUR FREE STOVE CATALOGUE.**

Cut this ad out and send to us, or on a postal card say: Send me your **FREE Stove Catalogue**, and **THE BIG STOVE CATALOGUE** will go to you by return mail, postpaid, **FREE**. You will get the most astonishing stove offer ever heard of; you will receive a new and most astonishingly liberal stove proposition.

**DON'T BUY A STOVE** anywhere and tell your neighbors not to buy a stove of any kind until they first write for our **New Special Stove Catalogue** and get **The Big Book, THE NEW OFFER OF OUR LATEST STOVE PROPOSITION. WRITE TODAY. DO IT NOW.**

**WE WILL TELL YOU SOMETHING YOU OUGHT TO KNOW.** Address, **SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO., CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.**



**AGENTS EARN \$75 to \$250 a Month Selling**

**NOVELTY KNIVES** with Roosevelt & Fairbanks and Parker & Davis Pictures, also your name, address, photo, lodge emblem, etc. underneath handles. Style 118 (like cut) 3 1/2 in. long, 2 blades; finely tempered razor steel, \$1.00. Cat. shows many styles. Send 2c stamp for great Special Offer to Agents. Big profits—good commission paid. Exclusive territory, **NOVELTY CUTLERY CO., 52 Bar Street, Canton, Ohio.**

We will pay you \$10 if you will cut out the Coupon on page six of this issue of **THE BLACK CAT**, and send it to some friend or acquaintance who will write a winning Short Story.

## But

the story must be in our hands before October 12, 1904.

The Short Story Publishing Company, Boston, Mass.

Established 1875.  
**A RECORD OF 29 YEARS**  
of successful treatment of the

## \$19.90 BIG PARLOR ORGAN

**FOR \$19.90** we furnish this big handsome solid golden oak Parlor Organ, stands 6 feet high, 4 feet long and 3 feet wide, latest style for 1904-5, guaranteed the equal of organs sold by others for nearly double the price. Shown by a large picture and fully described in our big free Organ Catalogue sent to any one for the asking.

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**HAVE YOU ANY USE FOR AN ORGAN?** If not, have you a friend who could use an organ? If the price was low enough, the offer liberal enough, the greatest chance ever known? If so, cut this ad out and send to us, and the catalogue, our several propositions, and our new and most astonishingly liberal offer ever made, will all go to you free by return mail, postpaid. **WRITE FOR OUR FREE ORGAN CATALOGUE AT ONCE.** Address, **SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO., CHICAGO, ILL.**



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The Reliable Whitney Fountain Pen. Price \$1.50. 14kt. gold, diamond point, patent adjustable feed. Pen will be sent free for examination. After purchase and 6 days' trial, money will be refunded if pen is unsatisfactory. AGENTS WANTED. E. W. WHITNEY, M'FR, 236 Superior St., Cleveland, Ohio. References, Union Nat'l Bank.

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Tells all about great opportunities to make money in this new oil field. This special number is fully illustrated and contains a vast fund of valuable, interesting and reliable information, read it before you invest a dollar. Heed its advice and you will surely become a successful investor. There are hundreds of opportunities to make big money in Kansas oil. Get posted and keep posted. Do it now, not tomorrow, but right NOW. Ask for Kansas Oil Edition, just out. Address, INVESTOR'S REVIEW, 1408 Oak Bldg., CHICAGO, ILL.

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having fancywork to sell, Embroideries, Battenberg, and Drawnwork, also to do order work, send stamped envelope. LADIES' EXCHANGE, Dept. 1, 34 Monroe Street, Chicago.



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Our No. 3 Reviver is a superior finish for kitchen and parlor floors



# Does Your Head Contain a Story?

Here's a chance for the man or woman who will tell a clever short story. Ten Thousand Six Hundred Dollars cash in sums from \$100 to \$1,500 for stories for

## The Black Cat

It matters not if you are unknown—if your story is worth reading here's your Stepping Stone to Success. Every State of the Union contains men and women who achieved fame and fortune through THE BLACK CAT, which pays nothing for name or reputation of a writer, but the highest price in the world for clever, original Short Stories.

While scores of Literary Men, Journalists, and Educators have proved successful in THE BLACK CAT contests, HUNDREDS of men and women in plain, every-day life have carried off rich prizes. In its last story contest, the Faculties of a dozen or more colleges were represented among the winners, yet the \$2,100.00 prize was won by Clifton C. Osborne, Fort Worth, Texas, who had never before written a story; and the second prize of \$1,300.00 went to Mrs. Clark Dooley, Houston, Missouri. THE BLACK CAT has in a single day paid more than twelve thousand dollars cash to winners in one of its story contests.

Read carefully the \$10,600.00 offer on the following page. Sleep over it. If you then feel sure that your own life doesn't contain a short story worth telling, worth reading, you may at least make \$10.00 by using the following coupon as directed.

.....  
Cut along this dotted line.

### **\$10 COUPON. THE BLACK CAT \$10,600 STORY CONTEST.**

We will pay ten dollars cash to the person who will send this coupon to some friend and induce that friend to send to THE BLACK CAT a story that will win a prize in its \$10,600 contest closing October 12, 1904.  
The person who cuts out and sends the coupon to a friend must write his own name and address here

.....  
The friend who writes the story must write his name and address here

.....  
and must send us the coupon with his story.

Only one coupon may be enclosed with a story.

No story will be considered at all unless submitted strictly in accordance with the conditions which appear in THE BLACK CAT—of newsdealers everywhere, 5 cents, or of us.

THE SHORTSTORY PUBLISHING COMPANY, 144 HIGH STREET, BOSTON.

# \$10,600 in Cash for Short Stories



We will pay the following cash prizes for short stories. In addition we will pay special prizes of \$100 or more each, and purchase at prices satisfactory to the writers tales found available but which fail to win prizes. We want original, out-of-the-ordinary stories, as short as possible. Bright, clean, humorous tales are especially desired, but no stories with more than one-tenth dialect. The morbid and unpleasant should be avoided rather than emphasized. Every story will be judged solely on its merits—name or fame of writer will carry absolutely no weight. The successful stories will be published in

## The Black Cat

First Prize - - - - -	\$1,500	6th to 10th } 5 Prizes, \$200 each - \$1,000
Second Prize - - - - -	1,000	11th to 30th } 20 Prizes, \$150 each - 3,000
Third Prize - - - - -	500	31st to 60th } 30 Prizes, \$100 each - 3,000
Fourth Prize - - - - -	300	
Fifth Prize - - - - -	300	

### TOTAL, \$10,600 CASH

**CONDITIONS.** 1. Every story must be strictly original and must, neither wholly nor in part, have appeared in print in any language.

2. Each manuscript must bear at the top of the first page the writer's real name and address in full (if it is desired that the story be published under a pen name, that must likewise be given), as also the number of words it contains, which may range from 1,000 to 5,000. Other things being equal, the shorter of two stories will be preferred.

3. Manuscripts must be plainly written (with typewriter or pen) on one side of paper only on sheets not larger than 9x11 inches, must be sent flat or folded, not rolled, postage fully prepaid, and accompanied by addressed and stamped envelopes for return. Letters advising submittal of stories must be enclosed with manuscripts, not sent separately, and to prevent loss the name and address of the sender should be on back of envelope. Manuscripts will be received and returned only at writers' risk.

4. With every manuscript there must be enclosed, in the same envelope, one yearly subscription to THE BLACK CAT, together with cents to pay therefor. On subscriptions to foreign countries 34 cents must be added for postage; but Canada, Mexico, Cuba, and our territorial possessions do not require foreign postage. Remit by draft, postal or express money order, or registered letter. One- or two-cent postage stamps in perfect condition will also be accepted. If competitors are already subscribers to THE BLACK CAT or submit more than one manuscript we will, if they so instruct us, extend their existing subscriptions or enter the new ones in the names of other parties. Any competitor may send as many stories as desired, but with each story all conditions must be complied with.

5. All envelopes containing manuscripts as above must be plainly marked "For Competition," and addressed, "The Shortstory Publishing Company, 144 High Street, Boston, Mass." Their receipt will be acknowledged as promptly as possible.

6. The competition will close October 12, 1904. The awards will be paid within 60 days thereafter, and announced in the earliest possible issue of THE BLACK CAT. We reserve the right to make such changes in awarding the prizes as unlooked-for circumstances may render desirable. Should, for instance, two stories of equal merit prove worthy of a prize, the prize will be either doubled or divided.

For stories unsuccessful in the competition but deemed desirable, we will either award special prizes of not less than \$100 each, or make a cash offer. All unsuccessful manuscripts submitted as above, will be returned as soon as found unsatisfactory. The conditions being here fully set forth, we cannot enter into correspondence relative thereto.

**IMPORTANT.** No story will be considered unless all the conditions are followed. Don't hold your story till the latest moment, but send it early, thus facilitating earliest possible decision.

The Shortstory Publishing Company, Boston, Mass.



# WORLD'S FAIR ROOMS \$1.00 PER DAY \$1.00

Visitors will experience an end of trouble unless they arrange for accommodations in advance of their arrival in St. Louis. During the height of the season the capacity of the city to take care of its visitors will be greatly taxed, and it will be almost impossible for visitors to secure accommodations of any nature UNAIDED.

"TRAVEL," the well-known and widely read magazine of travel and fiction, the leading feature of which is THE WORLD'S FAIR, has listed over 10,000 carefully selected rooms in refined, private families and family hotels. Great care has been used in selecting only houses in respectable locations. "TRAVEL" guarantees both the respectability of the house and the location. The rate is \$1.00 per day in rooms accommodating from 2 to 4 persons each. The houses are all situated in the beautiful and fashionable West End, within a few minutes' walk or ride of the Fair Grounds.

**"Travel's" Offer** In order to advertise "TRAVEL" and get it before the World's Fair visitors, we have established an Information and Rooming House Department in rooms 212-214 Odd Fellows' Building (opposite Post Office) for the accommodation and convenience of subscribers and friends of "TRAVEL." There is absolutely no charge connected with this service. In fact, you will confer a favor on us by calling and taking advantage of it. Write us for circular giving full information. Should you desire to become posted on the Fair it will pay you to subscribe for "TRAVEL."—\$1.00 a year, 3 months' trial 25c., single copies 10c.

## TRAVEL PUBLISHING CO.

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Each of these six small pictures represents a well-known Garden Vegetable. Can you guess the names of three of them? If so, send stamp quick and you will get a Beautiful Present Free. **THREE CORRECT ANSWERS WIN.** Send the names with 2-cent stamp to pay postage at once and you will get the beautiful

EACH OF THE SIX  
PICTURES REPRESENTS  
A GARDEN  
VEGETABLE. CAN YOU  
NAME 3 OF THEM?



present by return mail. Everyone has an equal chance to win a prize. If you have not succeeded in other prize contests you will surely succeed in this, because there is no catch about it—it is simply a test of your ability to name Three Garden Vegetables. Try it. Don't wait; send stamp to-day. Address plainly: **NEW IDEAS VEGETABLE CONTEST, DEPT. 71, 1216 FRANKFORD AVENUE, PHILADELPHIA PA.**

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10 men in each State to distribute samples and collect for manufacturer. Salary \$50 per month and expenses.

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If you would have any use for a heavy or medium weight all wool Suit, Overcoat or Ulster, then **DON'T BUY ELSEWHERE** at any price, under any circumstances, until you cut this advertisement out and mail it to us. You will then receive by return mail free, postpaid, the **Grandest Clothing Offer** ever heard of. You will get **FREE** a big book of cloth samples of Men's Clothing, **FREE** an extra quality cloth tape measure (yard measure), **FREE** a book of Latest Fashions, descriptions and illustrations of all kinds of clothing for men. We will explain why we can sell at prices so much lower than were ever before known, a mere fraction of what others charge. We will explain our simple rules so you can take your own measure and how we guarantee a perfect fit. You will get our **Free Trial Offer, our Pay After Received Proposition.** With the free outfit goes a special sample order blank for ordering, return envelope, etc., etc. You can get a whole Suit, an extra pair of Pants and an Overcoat under our offer for about **ONE-HALF** what some Chicago tailors would charge for one single pair of pants. The offer you will get will astonish and please you. Prices on the best clothes made reduced to next to nothing compared with what you have been paying. **DON'T BUY CLOTHES** until you cut this ad. out and send to us, and see what you get by return mail, free, postpaid. Address

**SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO., CHICAGO, ILL.**

## 10 Dollars Cash for 5 Minutes' Work

We will pay you \$10 if you will cut out the Coupon on page xiv of this issue of THE BLACK CAT, and send it to some friend or acquaintance who will write a winning Short Story.

**But** The story must be in our hands before October 12, 1904.

The Shortstory Publishing Co., Boston, Mass.

"FOR THIRTY-SIX YEARS A STANDARD PIANO"

# THE WING PIANO



45 Styles to select from

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imitates perfectly the tones of the mandolin, guitar, harp, zither and banjo. Music written for these instruments with and without piano accompaniment can be played just as perfectly by a single player on the piano as though rendered by an orchestra. The original instrumental attachment has been patented by

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1868—THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR—1904





**Joe Chapple**  
is at  
**the FAIR**

I have taken the National Magazine to the St. Louis Fair. It is being printed and published as an exhibit of high-grade magazine making, showing every step "from Manuscript to Mail Bag." There will be six numbers printed, each one a souvenir. If you send me 24 2-cent stamps, I will enter your name as a six months' subscriber to the "National," and send the entire six souvenirs. If you send

## 12 2-Cent Stamps

the issues for three months will be sent. If you come to the Fair, I want to meet you. I want you to "know Joe Chapple" and what he stands for. I want you to get acquainted with "The National." I particularly want you to read the leading article in the July number, entitled "Early Ideals of Great Men," containing essays by John D. Rockefeller on "Freedom," "Education," "Recollections of the Past," etc. You will understand then why Senator Allison says, "It is my favorite periodical," and why Senator Frye says, "It is one of our best magazines." Make a memorandum now to meet Joe Chapple in the Liberal Arts Palace at the Fair.

Mrs. Chapple and I are planning a trip to London and Paris in September. We intend taking five subscribers with us, all expenses paid. If you accept the above offer, you may be one of them.

ASK FOR INFORMATION ABOUT LONDON TRIP

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There are none as good

Send for Catalogue, showing goods in actual colors; it is Free.  
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rids away the freckles and beautifies your

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and all the great West, described in *Sunset Magazine* in a way that delights every reader. Not alone are the Scenic, Social and Literary sides of the West shown, but the great Industrial side—the side on which open the Doors of Opportunity—is set forth with compelling interest. You will find MEAT in *Sunset*, as well as plenty of SAUCE, in the way of stirring Western Stories. Every number illustrated with beautiful half-tones. By the copy, 10 cents; by the year, \$1.00. All news-dealers handle it. Published monthly at 4 Montgomery Street, San Francisco.

# MAGAZINE

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and return from Chicago. Strictly first-class tickets on sale August 15 to September 10, good returning October 23, 1904. Choice of routes. Correspondingly low rates from other points.

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Two fast trains per day through to California.

**The Best of Everything.**  
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HW237

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REVERSIBLE COLLAR CO., Dept. O, Boston

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Nervousness, dyspepsia and all the results of them, are little known in their countries. And beer is the national beverage. From childhood to age almost every soul drinks it.

There's a lesson in that fact. Malt and hops are nerve foods and tonics. The slight percentage of alcohol is an aid to digestion.

And the habit of beer drinking supplies the body with fluid to flush the system of waste. The lack of that fluid is the main cause of nervous disorders.

Your doctor will tell you that pure beer—Schlitz beer—is good for you.



*Ask for the Brewery Bottling.*

"The groves were God's first temples."

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A copy of No. 20 of the "Four-Track Series," "The Adirondacks and How to Reach Them," will be sent free on receipt of a 2-cent stamp by George H. Daniels, General Passenger Agent, New York Central R. R., Grand Central Station, New York.



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**FOR EVERY BABY**

They fit neatly over the diaper and fasten securely without pins. Made of Stork sheeting, the famous **water-proof** fabric. Contain no rubber. Keep baby's skirts and dresses perfectly dry and sweet. They are light and cool, wash as easily as a handkerchief, and will not heat, chafe or irritate. Made in three sizes—small, medium and large. Adjustable—perfect fit assured. Ask your dry goods dealer for Stork Pants.

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or diaper bag, made of plaid Stork sheeting. Will fit exactly inside a 22-inch shopping bag, or may be carried in a valise. Every mother needs such a pouch when traveling with baby. It is waterproof and can be washed almost instantly.

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For sale by dry goods dealers everywhere, or by mail, postpaid, on receipt of price. Send for booklet, catalog and samples of Stork sheeting. Address

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**Dept. B. C., Broad St., Boston, Mass.**

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